

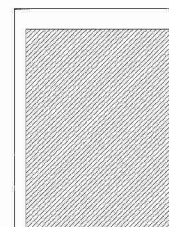


26 Exhilarating Escapes

Who says weekends away have to be spent lounging poolside in some dusty B&B? While that's all well and good, here are some easy-to-drive-to jaunts that will have you hiking, shopping, dining, soaking in culture, living it up—or being completely daring.

By **MALERIE YOLEN-COHEN** WITH **ESTHER DAVIDOWITZ, MARISA LaSCALA, AND LAURIE YARNELL**

Travelers these days have a voracious appetite for value but not at the expense of luxury. We want high-thread-count linens, featherbeds, transcendent views, meals that transport, award-winning wine lists, and, at checkout, a bill that doesn't insult our intelligence. In other words, we want highbrow without the "if-you-have-to-ask-then-you-can't-afford-it" attitude. We searched for those B&Bs, inns, and hotels whose owners or managers wish to provide an exceptional body, mind, and soul-satisfying experience but, amazingly, take pleasure in service over outrageous profit.



exhilaratingescapes

[over-the-top]

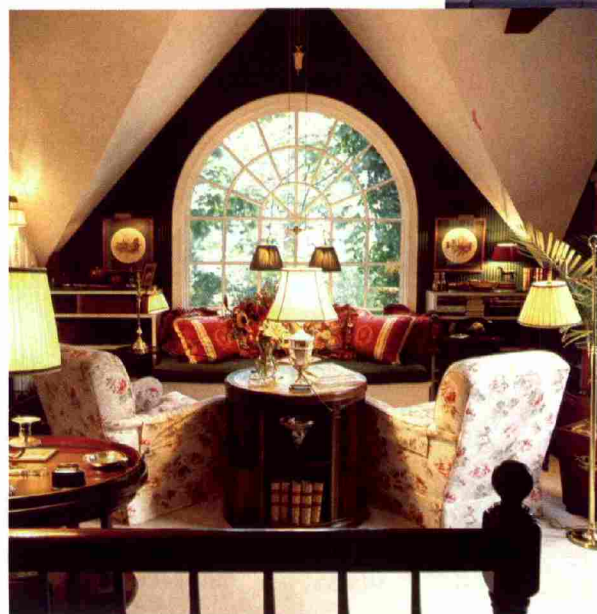
The Secret Garden

The Charlotte Inn

27 S Summer St, Edgartown (Martha's Vineyard), MA
 (508) 627-4751; relaischateaux.com/charlotte

Four and a half hours from White Plains to the ferry launch site at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, followed by a 45-minute ferry ride to the island. Ferry reservations are required for visitors bringing a car to the island and it's recommended to make them as far in advance as possible (508-477-8600). No reservations are required for walk-on passengers.

Discerning travelers have been visiting this veddy veddy posh and proper Vineyard gem, the only Relais & Châteaux property on the island, since 1920. An oasis of civility tucked behind a shiny black iron fence, the Charlotte Inn feels far removed from the lively seaside village of Edgartown, though it actually is just a half-block stroll away. Comprising an 1860s Main House (originally the home of a wealthy merchant) and four smaller adjacent buildings (including one, the Garden House, that dates back to 1705), the inn is a meticulously restored example of Edwardian elegance. The property's visual centerpiece is its enchanting gardens featuring formal English-style plantings, courtyards, and meandering brick paths. A wicker rocking chair on the Summer House's full-length porch is the perfect perch from which to gaze at the gardens, sip an iced tea, get lost in a



good book—and catch a catnap. Interiors are equally inviting. Each of its 25 guest quarters is graciously appointed in English style, showcasing 19th-century antiques, equestrian engravings, and sterling-silver dresser sets. The effect is unabashedly romantic. Indeed, visitors with children under 14 and those traveling in a party of more than four are politely steered to other, more suitable, accommodations. Not to be missed is the inn's Catch at the Terrace restaurant. Dine indoors or out on superb New American cuisine featuring seasonal and native ingredients.

While Here: Hop an island jitney for a five-minute ride to sunbathe on a pristine sandy beach, browse Edgartown's many boutiques and galleries, or cycle over to nearby Oak Bluffs to explore its historic colorful gingerbread cottages and picnic on its charming waterfront green. The island also offers a wealth of outdoor pursuits, both on water (sailing, fishing, water-skiing, kayaking, para-sailing, etc.) and on land (golf, tennis, hiking, biking, horseback riding, etc.).

Ask for: The Carriage House Suite (\$750-\$850), featuring its own private outdoor entrance, bedroom with king bed, and living room with fireplace, all styled in pleasantly overstuffed English antique fashion.

Just the Facts: Room rates vary according to season and accommodations (\$295-\$1,000). A continental breakfast, served in the Main House's glass-paned conservatory or outdoors on a private terrace, is included. Room service is limited to beverages only.

[over-the-top]

A Socialite-Style Sojourn

The Chanler at Cliff Walk

Newport, RI
 (866) 793-5664; thechanler.com

Three hours from White Plains

Weekending at this luxurious historic seaside retreat gives a glimpse into this tony town's famed Gilded Age but with such welcome amenities as flat-screen TVs, Wi-Fi, and double Jacuzzis. Built in 1865 as a summer residence for New York Congressman John Winthrop Chanler and his wife, Margaret Astor Ward, this French Victorian mansion underwent a three-year restoration, earning it recognition from *Food & Wine* magazine as one of the 15 best new luxury hotels.

The Chanler's intimacy is one of its many charms (the fact that it overlooks the Atlantic Ocean is another); there are only 20 guest quarters, including five suites, set within the main house or in the newer villas. Each has a wet bar and fireplace and is meticulously styled with authentic period furnishings; 12 feature private outdoor decks and 17 offer ocean views. Its oversized bathing chambers—"bathrooms" doesn't do them justice—are downright decadent. Handcrafted of marble or granite, most have multi-head showers with body jets and/or rain heads, heated floors, flat-screen TVs, and hand-painted and hand-glazed tiles and murals. Do be sure to dine at the Chanler's Spice Pear Restaurant. Winner of a *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence, it presents seasonally inspired New England cuisine either indoors with a glorious oceanfront view or, weather permitting, on its charming seaside terrace.

While Here: Tour Newport's many historic "cottages" (newportmansions.org), stroll along the famed three-and-a-half mile Cliff Walk (with its stunning ocean views on one side and the back lawns of the mansions on the other), sunbathe on its beautiful beaches, explore its lively shopping and dining scene, or take in a spirited game of polo. Also, be sure to experience Newport's many summertime special events, such as its renowned film, music, and jazz festivals, tennis championships, and yacht regatta.

Ask For: The Regency (\$475-\$1,295). These regally appointed guest quarters feature a spacious seating area, oversized deck, and breathtaking ocean, lawn, and garden views.

Just The Facts: Room rates (\$275-\$1,295), which include a made-to-order breakfast, vary according to accommodations and season. Twenty-four-hour room service is available.



exhilarating escapes



[over-the-top]

Tradition with a Twist

The Pitcher Inn

Warren, VT
 (888) 867-4824; pitcherinn.com

Five hours from White Plains

At first glance, this Relais & Châteaux hostelry looks like the stereotypical New England white clapboard inn, complete with wide front porches, second-story balconies, and gabled rooftop. Stepping into an Adirondack-styled common room with an enormous stone fireplace continues the illusion. But further exploration reveals that the Pitcher Inn is far from stereotypical. When an original 1800s structure on the site burned to the ground in 1993, the property's new owners decided to build an old-fashioned inn in its stead—but one with whimsical rooms that subvert the inn's traditional leanings. The showpieces of the property are its 11 delightfully eccentric yet undeniably lavish guest quarters. With themes like "nineteenth-century school room" and "duck blind," each room is whimsically styled with handcrafted furnishings and trompe l'oeil accents.

While here: Pick up gourmet picnic provisions at the old-fashioned Warren Store directly across the street, then set out to cycle or hike through the countryside. Or hit the links, canoe, kayak, or cast your fishing line on the river, or take a dunk in an old-fashioned swimming hole. Not the outdoorsy type? Score some vintage McCoy pottery at a dusty old antiques shop, pamper yourself with a massage at the inn's spa, or just stretch out on a lounge chair to watch the river go by. In the evening, enjoy contemporary American cuisine featuring fresh regional ingredients, either by candlelight or on the back veranda. Oenophiles will want to reserve a table in the romantic wine cellar (its collection has garnered numerous accolades from Wine Spectator) to savor a special tasting menu.

Ask for: Trout (\$575), an octagonal room featuring a king-size bed crafted from actual tree trunks, a wood-burning, river-stone fireplace, a fly-tying desk, and private porch overlooking the river.

Just the facts: Rates range from \$375 to \$700 and include full breakfast and daily afternoon tea; one three-course dinner is included with a Sunday-through-Thursday visit.

BTW: Stop on the way in Quechee Lakes, Vermont, for lunch or dinner at the Parker House (theparkerhouseinn.com). Dining on its back porch overlooking the river is the perfect antidote for the travel-weary.

[over-the-top]

Fido-Friendly Fun

The Mill House Inn

East Hampton, NY
 (631) 324-9766; millhouseinn.com

Two and a half hours from White Plains

If the big black dog on the Mill House Inn's website doesn't convince you that this standout B&B in tony East Hampton is pet-friendly, perhaps the big plush black dog that lounges on each and every bed will. Proving that you don't have to sacrifice ultimate indulgence while traveling with Fido, the Mill House Inn was voted one of "Top 50 Small Hotels in the U.S." by Zagat 2007 and 2008. If you're taking your dog, why not bring your kids along, too? Rooms are smashing nautical sleek—the America's Cup Suite has navy blue walls, flat-screen plasma TVs, two-person glass shower—and filled with the snazzy amenities you'd expect in an extravagant human/adult-only property: Frette linens, Kohler fixtures, featherbeds, organic soaps, and bath salts. Complimentary breakfast here is so over-the-top amazing, non-guests often call for reservations. "We once ran an ad in a local magazine offering 'Breakfast for two starting at four hundred dollars, lodging included,'" says owner/innkeeper Sylvia Muller, "and we got calls for breakfast alone."

While Here: Take the kids to the elaborate playground in the middle of East Hampton or to the Bridgehampton Children's Museum. You can enjoy pony rides, salamander walks, story times, or Sag Harbor's Goat on a Boat Puppet Theatre. Slather on the sunscreen and spend a day or two at Main Beach—considered one of the world's best.

Ask for: Captain Suite (\$950 in season), a two-room suite with one queen and one day bed, gray-green walls, and a fireplace. Add \$75 per child and \$50 per "good dog."

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$225-\$1,200) include extraordinary gourmet breakfast (e.g., salmon-and-goat cheese thin-crust breakfast pizza), use of beach blankets, towels, cookies round the clock, oversize bathrooms with double marble showers in suites, iPod docks, the New York Times, and flat-screen TV.



[over-the-top]

A Taste of the Good Life

The Wauwinet

Nantucket, MA
 (800) 426-8718; wauwinet.com

Five hours from White Plains (including one-hour high-speed ferry)

So exclusive it does not even have a "lodging" identifier (Inn, Hotel, B&B) in its name, the Wauwinet entices A-list conscious guests to its edge-of-Nantucket sanctuary. An esteemed Relais & Châteaux property, it has racked up dozens of prestigious awards and distinctions including *Condé Nast* Gold List and *Travel and Leisure's* World's Best. Formerly a whaling seaport, Nantucket Island is a National Historic District, vigilant in keeping its 17th-century, gray-shingled appearance. Whaling captains, however, have been replaced by Lilly Pulitzer- and Tommy Bahama-wearing landlubbers from suburbs and cities; downtown, with its cobblestone streets is now a commercialized series of galleries, scrimshaw shops, and Vineyard Vines-like boutiques. The Wauwinet is nine miles away from all this hustle and bustle, on the edge of the Great Point Wildlife Sanctuary. Pine armoires, stuffed chintz seating, and fine antiques fill each sun-flooded guestroom and cottage, and, with daily guided tours through nature preserves and out to Sconset (an historic fishing village), as well as *Zagat's* highest-rated Massachusetts restaurant, *Topper's*, on site—there's no need to leave this ocean and bayside resort.

While Here: Take advantage of these two complimentary Wauwinet offerings (Monday-Friday only): the Great Point Natural History Tour via jeep and a trip to Sconset in a newly restored 1946 Ford Woody Wagon. Munch on celebrated Chef David Daniels's signature truffled rigatoni and cheeses at the Wauwinet's *Topper's* Restaurant, and book a Cranberry Crush Body Treatment at the Wauwinet's *Spa by the Sea*, which uses fresh-from-the-garden rose, chamomile, rosemary, lavender, and hydrangea oils.

Ask for: The Deluxe Bayview Room (\$620-\$1,220 per night)—king bed and understated elegance in a room decorated in shades of terra cotta, eggshell, sand, and ecru.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$380-\$1,450) include full breakfast, early risers' coffee and pastries, afternoon cheese, port and sherry, flat-screen TV, fresh wildflowers, hourly boat jitney into town, Wi-Fi, Caudalie toiletries, Rivolta Carmignani linens, use of mountain bikes, small boats and kayaks, fresh fruit, unlimited bottled water, movies on request with hot buttered popcorn, use of personalized iPods, "Sherpa" service to collect shopping goods in town, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, and complimentary narrated tours of the island Monday to Friday.



[climb every mountain]

Down-Home Comfort

Chestnut Inn @ Oquaga Lake

Deposit, NY
 (866) 467-0002; chestnutinn.com

Two and a half hours from White Plains

If not shuttered entirely, many small resorts in the northern Catskills have proven to be shabby ghosts of flourishing times. This certainly was true of the Chestnut Inn, which was built in 1927 with rich chestnut wood and by the 1970s was but a splinter of its former self. However, in 2006, its 35 small rooms were transformed into 17 luxury suites (with traditional décor, 600-thread-count linens, Jacuzzis, and flat-screen TVs), and a new, imaginative restaurant has begun to attract attention. So it might just be the time to deposit yourselves in Deposit, New York. A strong sense of old-fashioned community is cherished around Oquaga Lake—let's just say it's not where the likes of Brangelina tend to summer (yet)—so despite its new makeover, you feel a nostalgic and relentless desire to just veg out. You can get out on the lake, loll on an Adirondack chair, or join the locals for Friday night's "Rock on the Dock"—a weekly rock and roll party that draws a fun-loving crowd.

While Here: Go paddle-boating, canoeing, swimming, fishing—It's a lake, for goodness sakes! Order black-and-blue rib eye or pear-and-Dijon chicken, among other American-infused fare at the Chestnut Inn Restaurant.

Ask for: A Jacuzzi Suite (\$219-\$249)—one room with king bed; second has a queen-size pull-out couch, with upscale touches like Bose radio, flat-screen TV, luxury linens, and European toiletries.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$179-\$249) include continental breakfast, use of canoes, paddle boats, and unlimited snoozing time on Adirondack chairs.



WWW.WESTCHESTERMAGAZINE.COM / JUNE 2008 / 57



[climb every mountain]

Rustic Retreat

Interlaken Inn

Lake Placid, NY
(518) 523-3180; theinterlakeninn.com

Four and a half hours from White Plains

A grand piano sitting atop an Oriental carpet greets you in the entryway. The hand-painted, four-wall mural of an Adirondack wetlands scene that envelops you in an award-winning dining room took a year to create. A polished-daily communal copper table and poster-size print of a tipsy chimp are focal points in the popular Monkey Bar. Professional wait staff, dressed in button-down shirts and ties, speak knowledgeably about wines from an extensive wine cellar. (No surprise that Interlaken has won *Wine Spectator's* Award of Excellence four years running.) Upstairs, linens are Frette, rooms bright and welcoming, and beds an oasis of softness. Upon checkout, after a three-course gourmet breakfast (included), the bill comes to almost half of what it would cost next door at the venerable Mirror Lake Inn, and this is not by accident. Owner Mary Neary goes to great lengths to keep room rates moderate even in peak season when many franchise, no-frills hotels command \$250 and more per double. Heralded as the only boutique inn in town, the Interlaken is the perfect place to savor a night after a grueling but exhilarating day climbing one of the dozens of high peaks in the area.

While Here: Pick up an Olympic Passport (\$29) at the ORDA (Olympic Regional Development Association) Store on Main Street, which gets you an in-the-know guided tour of the hockey arena at which the U.S. beat the Russians (the Miracle on Ice) in the 1980 Olympics, an elevator ride to the top of the 120-meter Olympic ski jump, a gondola ascent to the top of Whiteface Mountain, and a discount on a bobsled ride at the Verizon Olympic Complex. Stroll the 2.7-mile walkway around Mirror Lake, which takes you past downtown boutiques and restaurants. Or bring out your inner mountain man and climb one of the 46 high peaks for which the region is named.

Ask for: The Red Toile Room (\$225), with four-poster king bed and private balcony.

Just the facts: Room rate (\$155-\$250) includes gourmet hot breakfast for two.

[climb every mountain]

Early American Charm

Colby Hill Inn

Henniker, NH
(603) 428-3281; colbyhillinn.com

Four hours from White Plains

Traditional American four-poster beds, fluffy brocade bedding, and small fireplaces—it's as if George Washington had just stepped out to tend to his troops and horses here at the Colby Hill Inn. Though Washington never slept in this 1797 tavern, Ted Turner and Gina Davis have, and they—like all guests—were treated to chocolate truffles on the nightstand, a wine list that caught the eye of *Wine Spectator* magazine, an in-ground pool, and floor-to-ceiling windows in the dining room through which you can watch an ever-changing display of feasting birds. "We take a lot of pride in our dining and lodging," says innkeeper Cyndi Cobb, who runs the inn with her husband, Mason. "Our New England contemporary cuisine has been featured in *Ski Magazine* and the *Boston Globe*, along with many other publications." With signature Chicken Colby Hill—a boneless chicken breast stuffed with lobster, leeks, and Boursin cheese with Chardonnay cream sauce—on the menu, it's worth staying in for dinner. When the Cobbs bought this place in 2000, they immediately stripped the cutesy, fussy, rosebud wallpaper, got rid of bulky canopy beds, and upgraded the linens. Each room is imbued with traditional American antiques—leaning this way and that on original wide-plank floors—along with contemporary amenities, including a little rubber bathtub ducky that you can take home.

While Here: Most people take advantage of all of the natural wonders this area has to offer. Procure a Rotary Club Outdoor Guide and choose from an array of hiking, biking, and kayaking routes that take you to covered bridges, fire towers, brooks, bogs, rivers, and lakes.

Ask for: The Carriage House Suite (\$249-\$279) a large room with queen canopy bed, cream-colored walls and carpeting, Queen Ann chairs, gas fireplace, rainwater shower in bathroom, and French doors onto deck overlooking an in-ground pool.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$140-\$279) include made-to-order breakfasts, use of outdoor pool, and fresh-from-the-oven cookies with soft drinks in the afternoon.

INTERLAKEN INN PHOTO BY GARY CRALLE

[it's a family affair]

On the Waterfront

Wentworth by the Sea Hotel & Spa

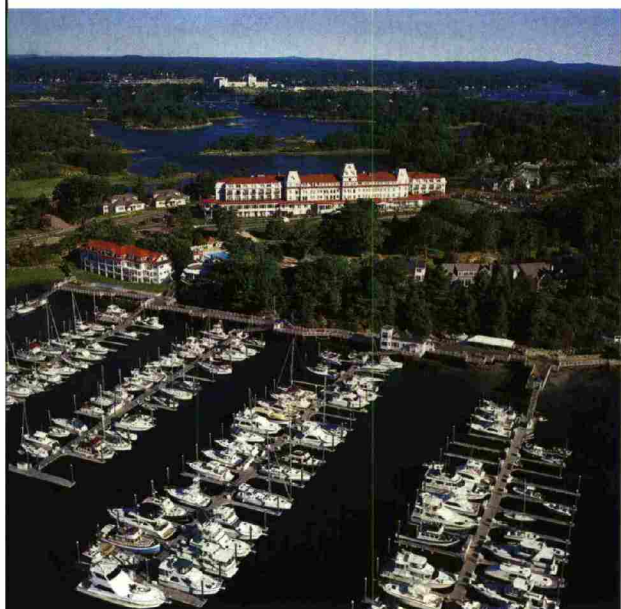
New Castle, NH
 (603) 422-7322; wentworth.com

Four hours from White Plains

At 6 am, we open the shades to witness a ball of fire rising slowly over an endless ocean. This is what we love about East Coast waterfront hotels—but not the only reason we yearned to stay at the Wentworth By the Sea. Several years ago, when we were in Portsmouth, our kayaking guide took us past the site of a massive reconstruction project. One of New Hampshire's last grand hotels, the Wentworth—a landmark in Victorian-era travel with as imposing a history as the presence it commands on Portsmouth Harbor—was being gutted and rebuilt as a flagship Marriott Hotel. President Theodore Roosevelt earned the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize by negotiating the end of the Russo-Japanese War here (the Treaty of Portsmouth), and though much of the 1874 hotel is new, the central portion, including the main entrance and lobby fireplace, remains. The restaurant's chef, Dan Dumont, recently presented a James Beard House dinner, and Wentworth routinely hosts highbrow offerings like the Winter Wine Festival. If you're not in the mood for an extravagant meal, opt for butternut squash-polenta tart and other bistro fare in the dark green pub where flickering faux candle sconces set a sophisticated mellow mood.

While Here: Spend time in Portsmouth's Market Square—dense with boutiques, eateries, and historic buildings. The kids will love the Children's Museum of Portsmouth (childrens-museum.org), and the 10-acre Strawberry Banke Museum, which depicts 400 years of life in Portsmouth with costumed re-enactors, hands-on archaeology digs, and other innovative programs, (strawberrybanke.org).

Just the Facts: The Breakfast at Little Harbor (\$199-\$499) gets you a room, buffet breakfast for two (includes make-your-own Belgian waffles and chef-made omelets) in a green dining room beneath an original hand-painted domed mural, and access to a huge indoor pool and steam room.



[it's a family affair]

Snack in Style

The Yorktowne Hotel

York, PA
 (800) 233-9324; yorktowne.com

Four hours from White Plains

If junk food is your guilty pleasure, there's no better place to spend a few crunchy-yummy days than in Pennsylvania's York County. The Snack Trail is to a muncher what the Wine Trail is to an oenophile, and at the center of it all is the Yorktowne Hotel—a Renaissance revival-style hotel with the county's only Four-Diamond restaurant. With 20-foot-high ceilings, wood paneling, and chandeliers dripping with crystals—not to mention 121 rooms packed with traditional furniture resplendent in stripes and floral prints—the hotel appropriately fits "America's First Capitol."

While Here: Dine on sophisticated American food downstairs at the Commonwealth Room. Spend a day navigating the source of crispy, fatty things; Martin's Potato Chips, Snyder's of Hanover, Utz, Stauffer Biscuit, Revonah Pretzels, and more open their operations to the public. Samples are guaranteed. Losing the sure-to-be-gained weight, though, is up to you.

Ask for/Just the Facts: The York County Salty Eats/Sweet Treats Package (\$165-\$205 per night per couple), which includes overnight accommodations, a basket filled with local snacks, a self-guided Snack Trail tour, and full breakfast for two.

[it's a family affair]

The Royal Treatment

Royal Sonesta Hotel

Cambridge, MA
 (617) 806-4200; sonesta.com

Three and a half hours from White Plains

As you walk through the lobby to get to the elevators, you'll pass—could it be—an original Andy Warhol? You'll no doubt be awed by the fact that you could just about dip your toes in the Charles River from the front door of the Royal Sonesta—a hotel that had fallen out of favor a few years ago only to reinvent itself as a modern art museum outpost. Now, come here to discover what revered art dealer Joan Sonnabend has curated for the hotel: a collection of foremost artists, including Warhol, Stella, Dine, Serra, and Mapplethorpe, among hundreds of others, displayed throughout all public areas. Each room has been redone in an ebullient deco/'50s contemporary mash of mod styles, complete with flat-screen HDTVs, one-of-a-kind masterpieces from local modern artists, high-count linens, and riveting views of either Cambridge or the Charles River. The art here draws aficionados from all over, but there's just too much to do within a few minutes' walk of the hotel to hang around, especially in the summer for a family seeking city thrills. Catch a narrated boat tour from the canal dock across the street. Or take advantage of hotel bikes to peddle the Charles River Bikeway. The prestigious Boston Science Museum can be seen right outside the lobby window.

While Here: You can spend a full weekend at the Boston Science Museum (mos.org), but the city features plenty of other delights, including the Swan Boats at Boston Common or mega shopping on Newbury Street. If you bring your kids along, grab a pie from California Pizza Kitchen at the nearby mall, set them up in the room with a movie, and make tracks downstairs to Restaurant Dante—on Oprah's list and one of Bon Appetit's Top 10 hot new restaurants—where attentive service and divine food hold equal weight.

Ask for: An executive suite overlooking the Charles River (\$560 in the summer), with king bed and, in a separate area, a pullout couch, each area with flat-screen TVs.

Just the Facts: The Summerfest is the most reasonable program we've ever seen from a Four-Diamond hotel. Beginning at \$209 for a group of four (per night), it includes a deluxe room Thursday through Sunday, complimentary bicycles, a free narrated 60-minute boat ride on the Charles, free van service into Boston, free ice-cream on the esplanade, and complimentary use of the health club. Again—that's \$209 for all four of you!

(continued on page 117)

[a jug of wine, a loaf
 of bread, and thou]
English Charm

Inn Victoria

Chester, VT
 (802) 875-4288; innvictoria.com

Three and a half hours from White Plains

Inn Victoria has been proclaimed by TripAdvisor as a Top Ten B&B (nation-wide), winner of the Travelers Choice Award 2008, and the *Vermont Green Mountain Guide's* Most Romantic Inn. But owners John and Julie Pierce, who hail from merry old England, are clued in to the fact that it takes more than looks to make it in the hospitality business. Their pride in this adorable Victorian on the town green is apparent. "We aim to make people happy the moment they come through the door," says a spry Julie. There's a sign over the kitchen—"Smile; It Confuses People"—which does, indeed, make guests smile. OK, so the parlor is a tad syrupy—crammed with some of the flamboyant pink fussiness of Victoriana—but the B&B's 600-square-foot rooms are larger than most and offer the lavish comfort of high-quality sleigh, brass, and ornately carved beds with granite counters in the bathrooms and European toiletries. Julie takes us into the most popular honeymoon suite, the Princess Alice (\$205-\$255), which sports a full fireplace and double Jacuzzi in the bathroom. On the inside of the closet doorframe, several names written within hearts have been preserved. "One of our guests got married here and started it—and now each couple who weds here adds their names. We won't ever paint over it," Julie says. "I think it's so adorable."

While Here: *Get hitched. Yes, this place has carved out a reputation as an elopement and civil union destination. Julie takes you to Town Hall for the license, decorates the parlor with gobs of flowers including "lots of baby's breath," makes arrangements with the JP; includes cake, sparkling beverage, two nights' lodging, dinner at an area hotel, and a DVD of photos—all for the unbelievable price of \$800 to \$1,100. Eliminate all the stress of wedding planning and save your money for a house down payment.*

Ask for: *The Princess Alice or the Princess Helena Suite (\$205-\$255) with bedside claw-foot tub set before a gas-burning stove (ah, romance), king sleigh bed, and one rustic wall kept from the original wood barn.*

Just the facts: *Room rates (\$110-\$255) include the likes of frittatas, crêpes, and what Julie affectionately calls "a puff thing with cheese and ham" breakfast served in a candlelit formal dining room on china, high-thread-count linens pressed by hand in-house, baked goods and coffee and tea in the afternoon, and just-out-the-door access to picture-perfect downtown Chester.*



exhilarating escapes



[a jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou]

Where Romance Reigns Supreme

King's Cottage

Lancaster, PA
 (800) 747-8717; kingscottagebb.com

Three hours from White Plains

The owners of King's Cottage know how to do romance right. Built in Mediterranean style in 1913 and recently restored, this Select Registry Inn "has been designated by American Historic Inns as a Top Ten Most Romantic Inn," reports owner Ann Willets. "We were the first B&B in Pennsylvania to receive this award and the only one in all of Lancaster County." The most requested VIP treatment is the Rose Petal Bath—drawn, in a Jacuzzi for two, while you and your honey are at dinner. Most of the rooms sport chandeliers and guests are known to come back just for the amazing breakfasts—sausage Florentine crêpes, sweet potato-pecan pancakes, and the like.

While here: Have dinner with an Amish family or hire a Mennonite guide to take you on a private tour of Pennsylvania Dutch Country; owners Ann Willets or Janis Kutterer will be happy to make arrangements. Lancaster also has a surprisingly vibrant art scene—performing, fine arts, crafts—with a constellation of galleries, studios, and theaters. Log onto lancasterarts.com for a comprehensive guide.

Ask for: The Carriage House (\$300-\$325), done up in burgundy and copper accents, or the Majestic Chamber (\$270-\$290) with hardwood floors, green walls, inlaid wood furniture. Both rooms contain flat-screen HDTVs and double whirlpool baths; and if you're feeling particularly reclusive, you can choose to have breakfast delivered in a picnic basket to your door.

Just the Facts: Room rate (\$165-\$325) includes full gourmet breakfast, a 24-hour guest kitchen with munchies, afternoon refreshments, complimentary DVD library, Wi-Fi.

[a jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou]

Tickled by Ivory

Copper Beech Inn

Ivoryton, CT
 (888) 809-2056; copperbeechinn.com

One and a half hours from White Plains

The Victorian era was a dangerous time for elephants. Tens of thousands were slaughtered to fuel the need for factory-produced piano keyboards, billiard balls, and combs. By the 1880s, nearly three-quarters of the elephant tusks from Zanzibar ended up on the docks of Essex, Connecticut, then carted a few miles to the piano factories of Ivoryton. Importing real ivory now, of course, is illegal; the factories are gone, but Ivoryton remains a charming weekend destination—if only as the setting for the romantic Copper Beech Inn. The interior is drenched in the deep golds and rusts of a rich man's home. Burnished woods and the soft tinkling of wine glasses at dinnertime resonate with your inner landed gentry, and in fact the inn's two restaurants; the Copper Beech Inn Restaurant and Brasserie PIP have won accolades from near and far (*Connecticut Magazine* and *Wine Spectator*, to name a couple) with inventive menus and a 4,000-bottle wine-cellar.

While Here: Spend time down the road in the riverfront towns of Chester—a crafters' and artists' haven where picturesque homes and 19th-century shops line a curved main street, and Deep River, the perfect place to launch a kayak or canoe on the Connecticut River, a ribbon of water the Nature Conservancy calls "one of the last great places on earth."

Ask for: The Copper Beech Suite (\$375); extremely spacious, done up in coral and Champagne hues, king four-poster mahogany bed with pillow-top mattress, marble bath, settee in front of fireplace; the most indulgent room in the house.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$195-\$375 per room) include a multi-course hot gourmet breakfast for two.

[a jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou]

Flower Power

The Inn at Bowman's Hill

New Hope, PA
 (215) 862-8090; theinnatbowmanshill.com

One and a half hours from White Plains

"It's a defining moment when people come through the gates of our property," says Mike Amery, owner of the Inn at Bowman's Hill. "It's like entering another world." Amery opened the inn, which borders the 134-acre Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, two and a half years ago and has since drawn celebrities—sports figures, songwriters, actors—and those who celebrate to six outstanding rooms. "Recently, a wife surprised her husband just off the plane from Iraq and took him straight here." The inn is a member of Condé Nast Select.

While Here: New Hope has a charming downtown and a singular attraction: mule-drawn canal barge rides. The Bucks

County Playhouse (buckscountyplayhouse.com), will produce *Funny Girl* and *The Full Monty* this summer. Head into Lambertville for some serious antiquing. For dinner, try celebrated French restaurant La Bonne Auberge (bonneauberge.com), housed in a 250-year-old farmhouse.

Ask for: The Tower Suite (\$405-\$525).

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$295-\$525) include signature "eight-items-on-a-plate" gourmet breakfast (using straight-from-the-chicken eggs), and afternoon snacks.

[a jug of wine, a loaf of bread,
and thou]

Low-Key Luxury

Inn at Stonington

Stonington, CT
 (860) 535-2000; innatstonington.com

Two hours from White Plains

Less a tourist draw than neighboring Mystic, Stonington is the kind of town where weekend escapees from New York City putter in Federal-style home front-yard gardens and say "hi" to passersby. It's this lack of highbrow pretentiousness that carries over to the way that owner Bill Griffin runs his graceful inn. "If you order wine or flowers for your room, we pass it along to you at cost," says co-manager Anne Starzec-Henson. "All calls from the room to anywhere in the U.S. are free. Bill doesn't want to gouge the guests." Half of the rooms in the two-building, 18-room Inn at Stonington face bucolic Stonington Harbor. Accommodations are both refined and warm—Frette linens, walls in soothing yellows, blues, and creams, dark spindly four-poster beds, and private balconies on harbor-front rooms. Travertine tiles in sparkling bathrooms lend a chic Italian air. From 6 to 7:30 pm, wine and cheese are served in the elegant parlor as "a nice way to meet the other guests," says Starzec-Henson. And the inn has an exclusive dining/cocktail arrangement with nearby Stonington Harbor Yacht Club.

While Here: Pick up a bottle of wine and a picnic basket at Theresa's Gourmet Deli and take a sunset cruise with singer/songwriter/boat captain Darin Keech on his 39-foot Ericson, *Poet's Lounge* (sailpoetslounge.com). On Sunday morning, walk over to the fantastically popular live jazz brunch at Skipper's Dock Restaurant (skippersdock.com).

Ask for: A seaside room (\$180-\$350); king four-poster or sleigh beds, fireplace, and water views.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$150-\$445) include afternoon wine and cheese reception. However, the inn often offers packages such as the winter Friday Night Special (\$289) for a seaside room and \$65 certificate towards dinner at one of several area restaurants. Check the inn's website for specials.



exhilarating escapes

[a jug of wine, a loaf
of bread, and thou]

Get the Blues

blue, The Inn on the Beach

Plum Island/Newbury, MA
 (978) 465-7171; blueinn.com

Four hours from White Plains

If you wish to impress your heart's desire, book an oceanfront suite at the ultra-chic blue, The Inn on the Beach. The small B&B is so hard to find, hotel staff have become adept at guiding lost guests, via cellphone, to what feels like the end of the earth. blue is the only lodging on Plum Island—a barrier island off of historic Newbury—wedged among shore homes in various stages of knockdown and renovation. A tiny lobby—pristine whitewash with blocks of blue glass accents—sports a flat-screen TV on which a video of ocean waves sets the tone. “That’s our webcam and you can also access it on our website to see what the conditions are before coming here,” says inn manager Diane Beaudry. “Rather cool,” we thought, not fully grasping the significance of the image until we walked into a white, white, white (with a touch of blue) Oceanfront Suite. On the far wall, French doors opened onto a private deck with a hot tub. And beneath the deck, sand. The beach. Those waves. A couple of pairs of royal blue flip-flops, propped on rolled towels, were waiting on a plump white bed. Wine was chilling in a cooler. A cushy chaise and full couch—slip-covered in white, and, of course, a blue throw—faced out to those dramatic Atlantic rollers. Heaven.

While Here: Bird-watch (Plum Island is home to the 4,600-acre Parker River National Wildlife Refuge). Stargaze. Bike. Surf. Or let the ultimate concierge service plan a romantic dinner cooked expressly for you on the beach, a day of sailing, a tour of the area. Your wish is their command. If you care to leave the premises, funky Plum Island Grille is the place to go for supper.

Ask for: An Oceanfront Suite (\$385 in season), unless you plan to bring your family. The Grand Salon accommodates four in a two-story, two-bedroom space with Viking appliances in a sun-drenched kitchen (\$995 per night).

Just the Facts: The Romantic Getaway Package (\$815 per couple) includes two nights in an Oceanfront Suite, dinner for two at a Newburyport restaurant, fresh flowers, Godiva truffles, a bottle of chilled wine (white, naturally), unlimited bottled water and sodas, souvenir flip-flops, breakfast delivered to your room in a picnic basket, use of bikes, surfboards, boogie boards, beach toys, cabanas, and lounge chairs.

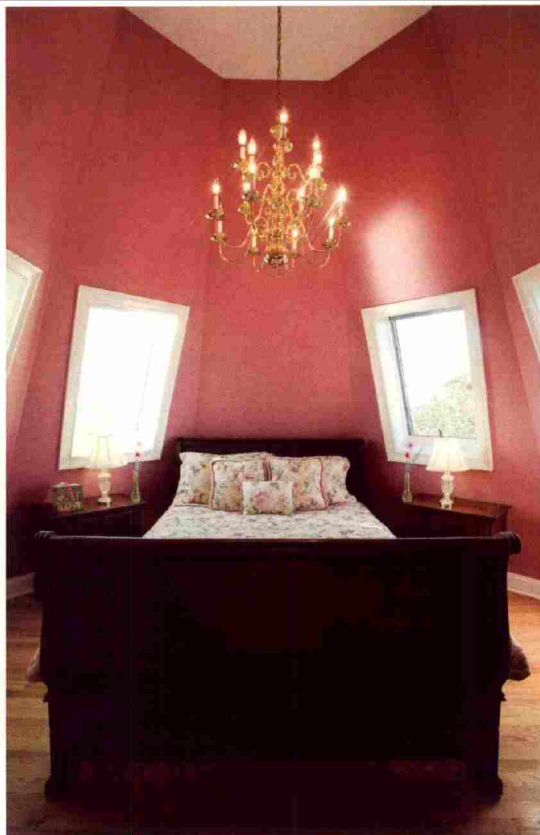
[a jug of wine,
a loaf of bread,
and thou]

Retro Chic

Spring Lake Inn

Spring Lake, NJ
 (732) 449-2010
 springlakeinn.com

One hour forty-five minutes
from White Plains



A mile or so off of Exit 98 on the Garden State Parkway, there's a time tunnel. Go through it and you come out in the Atlantic oceanfront town of Spring Lake—circa 1890. There are no traffic lights. No parking meters. There are no fried dough or fudge hawkers on a two-mile, arrow-straight, wood-planked path—no hawkers of any kind at all. Spring Lake offers the longest non-commercial section of ocean boardwalk in New Jersey. The 16-room Spring Lake Inn commands a corner one block away from the waves of the Atlantic. Red-and-white striped awnings shade rocking chairs on an inviting, 80-foot front porch from which you'd expect to see a barbershop quartet stroll by. Built in 1888, the inn is a grand shore-town Victorian, owned and restored by Barbara and Andy Seaman, who are not afraid to use saturated colors in each unique room. Emerald greens, deep burgundies, electric pinks, blazing yellows—each accommodation is a mélange of styles; rag rugs with lace curtains, wingback chairs amid fringed floor lamps. Rooms are so distinctive, it's tough to choose. “There's one couple who comes often from Pennsylvania and is one room short of staying in all sixteen,” reports Andy. Look closely, and you'll see solar panels on the roof. “We installed those in September 2007,” Andy says. “We're not quite self-sufficient, but it's a start.” Sometimes bringing the lodging industry into the 21st century takes some old-fashioned common sense.

While Here: Beach it! Spring Lake Beach was ranked by About.com as the best classic beach in the United States. Access badges normally cost \$9 but come with a room at the inn. Also, don't miss a walk around (and over, via wooden foot-bridges) pond-size Spring Lake and shopping in a quaint, but chic, downtown. Not one franchise store—and fun boutiques like Splash, Camel's Eye, Urban Details, Pink Pony, and the Spot will win you over with reasonable prices. Dine at the inventive Black Trumpet (theblacktrumpet.com)—where “Lobster Cappuccino” (lobster bisque) emerges from the kitchen in a glass coffee mug, grilled Cesar salad is half a head of Romaine touched by flame, and fish is expertly prepared—or beneath several small crystal chandeliers at romantic Whispers (whispersrestaurant.com). Both are highly rated by Zagat and are a block from the inn.

Ask for: Everyone has a favorite. Though the Tower Room (\$399) is popular, we are partial to the rectangular burgundy-hued Moonbeam Room (\$329), which has windows on two walls and a telescope pointed at the sky.

Just the Facts: Rooms are large enough to accommodate a couple port-a-cribs, and kids are welcome here. Room rates (\$219-\$399 in season) include a hot gourmet breakfast, e.g., crème brûlée French toast—for two, beach access badges for all, use of beach chairs, blankets and towels, cookies and refreshments in the afternoon.

[a jug of wine, a loaf of bread,
 and thou]

Castles in the Sand

Sand Castle B&B

Long Beach Island, NJ
 (609) 494-6555; sandcastlebi.com

Two hours from White Plains

Modern exterior, well-dressed rooms, and touted as Best Breakfast in Northeast by *Arrington's Inn Traveler Magazine*, the adults-only Sand Castle B&B is quite an anomaly considering most foreboding sandy couched hotels on this spit of New Jersey. Growing in popularity, Long Beach Island, an 18-mile-long barrier island, is considered one of the greatest treasures on the Jersey Shore. There are very few lodging options here because most residences are privately owned, and those hotels that do advertise have names like "Drifting Sands" and "Surf City" (which boasts a liquor store on premises). In the stately Sand Castle, guests can choose between white-bright rooms containing arched windows, mesmerizing views of Barnegat Bay, four-poster beds, vaulted ceilings, private decks, flat-screen TVs, and lofts—no two rooms are alike.

While here: Climb to the top of the lighthouse at Barnegat Lighthouse Park, just steps from the inn, for a panoramic view of Barnegat Bay. Spend a day



on the sugar-soft sand, recently voted "prettiest beach" on *topbeaches.com*, and don't miss a visit to Viking Village, a collection of shops and a commercial fishing fleet.

Ask for: Lighthouse Vista Suite (\$280-\$425) and stargaze from your loft's double Jacuzzi, before heading down the spiral staircase to a luxe king bed.

Just the facts: Room rates (\$185-\$425) include full sumptuous breakfast served in a formal dining room, use of bikes and tennis racquets, beach-access badges, beach chairs, towels, soft drinks 24/7, fireplace, and Wi-Fi.



[for culture vultures;
shopping on the side]

Catskill Chic

The Villa at Saugerties

Saugerties, NY
 (845) 246-0682; thevillaatsaugerties.com

One hour forty minutes from White Plains

Say goodbye to the chintz, the brocade, and the stuffy Victorian furniture. Just because you want to get away for the weekend doesn't mean you want to leave your sense of style behind with the babysitter. Innkeepers Aimee Szparaga and Richard Nocera know just how you feel. After all, they're ex-Manhattanites. So when they decided to convert their Mediterranean-style house in upstate New York, they filled it not with antiques but with urbane contemporary furnishings and minimal fussiness. The beds are sleek, birch platforms; the baths are chic poured concrete, the artwork is all cool and original (some works by Nocera himself). Choose where you'd like to relax: the bluestone patio by the 40-foot pool outside or the Dutch modern fireplace inside. Rip Van Winkle fell asleep for 40 years while in the Catskills and, after spending a night at the Villa, you'll understand why. It's located far enough off the main drag that it's the quietest night you could possibly experience, and no lights make it through except the light of the stars. Those 350-count Egyptian cotton sheets don't hurt, either. In the morning, Szparaga, who was once a dining critic for *Time Out New York*, prepares a fresh breakfast from scratch, tailored to your tastes.

While Here: Downtown Saugerties has a very Main Street, U.S.A., feel and is lined with browse-worthy antiques shops and bookstores. Or you can get yourself back to the garden with a two-minute drive to the artsy town of Woodstock. Movie mavens flock to the annual Woodstock Film Festival each October, but foodies get a festival of their own right in Saugerties: the Hudson Valley Garlic Festival in September.

Ask For: While the Studio (\$195-\$235) may be the biggest room, and includes amenities like a stainless-steel mini-refrigerator, the Flat (\$165-\$185) might be more stylish, with modern steel furnishings and a rainfall shower cordoned off by a glass-block wall.

Just the Facts: Rates for the five guest rooms (\$135-\$235) include breakfast and all the snacks you can grab from the fridge. From mid-November to the end of May, the property is available as a private vacation rental on a weekly (\$2,500) or monthly (\$6,000) basis.

[for culture vultures;
shopping on the side]

To the Manor Born

Manor House

Norfolk, CT
 (860) 542-5690; manorhouse-norfolk.com

One hour forty-five minutes from White Plains

Home of the renowned Norfolk Summer Music Festival and set on the Connecticut side of the culturally rich Berkshires, the little hamlet of Norfolk has been drawing legions of wealthy weekenders for 150 years. Charles Spofford built his Victorian Tudor mansion here in 1898. Now called the Manor House, this nine-room bed & breakfast features 20 original Tiffany stained-glass windows and is a repository for pedigreed furniture gleaned from a nearby buggy-whip factory that has been repurposed as a marketplace for nearly 100 antiques dealers. Four-poster beds softened by gauze curtains, crystal chandelier illuminating a hot breakfast smorgasbord each morning—the splendor of the Victorian era has come to modern times.

While Here: Climb a nearby granite tower to overlook three states, hike to a series of waterfalls. Drive 10 minutes to Buggy Whip Antiques (buggywhipantiques.com) and pick up the farm table of your dreams. Ask the innkeepers to prepare a gourmet picnic basket (meal with glassware, silverware, and china starts at \$30 for two), then roll a blanket out on the grass down the street for the Yale Summer School of Music Norfolk Chamber Music Festival (yale.edu/norfolk).

Ask for: The Master Bedroom (\$255). Heavy on wood paneling, the room features a four-poster king bed, which overlooks a sitting area and fireplace. Private balcony.

Just the Facts: Room rate (\$130-\$255 in season) includes gourmet breakfast items and fresh flowers in each room.

[for culture vultures;
shopping on the side]

Farm Fresh

The Guest House at Field Farm

Williamstown, MA
 (413) 458-3135; guesthouseatfieldfarm.org

Two and a half hours from White Plains

Let's say you'd like to stay in an iconic property that represents a certain moment in recent time, a property like Philip Johnson's Glass House, for example, but with fewer win-

dows. Luckily, the Guest House at Field Farm, a Bauhaus-style home built in 1948 to house the contemporary artwork of lumber mogul Lawrence Bloedel (who turned down Frank Lloyd Wright as architect because Bloedel preferred to buy and construct his own furniture), now offers five retro-modern guest rooms in a spectacular field and mountain-foothills setting. Its spacious common living room contains an enviable collection of '50s modern furniture. Set your wine glass down on a Noguchi table. Read under a floor lamp by Design Within Reach. Swerve around in an Eames chair. Peruse the Wolf Kahn paintings. The whole place is an embarrassment of Danish design wonders right down to the cork flooring.

While Here: Embrace your inner artist by perusing three standout museums: MassMoca, the Williams College Art Museum, and the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Have dinner at mod little Mezze Bistro (mezzeinc.com). In summer, the celebrity-favored summer stock, Williamstown Theatre Festival, is staging the musical *She Loves Me* and Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, among other productions.

Ask for: The North Room (\$225-\$250). Bedding is big and comfy, white set off by vibrantly colored accent pillows. A small sitting area in front of a little fireplace and Frette towels and European toiletries in a gray-tiled bathroom stay true to '50s design. In the morning, throw back the curtains to reveal staggering meadow and mountain views.

Just the Facts: Room rate (\$150-\$295) includes three-course breakfast made to order served around a teak dining table in a deep-plum and olive-green-hued room, a "guest pantry" where water, soda, and cookies are served in the afternoon, outdoor pool, and exceptional mountain views.

[for culture vultures;
shopping on the side]

Revolutionary Relaxation

3 Liberty Bed & Breakfast

Clinton, CT
 (860) 669-0111; 3liberty.com

One and a half hours from White Plains

Your view from the front porch of this immaculately restored Colonial home is quite revolutionary—literally. The triangle of land upon which 3 Liberty sits was a militia-mustered field during the Revolutionary War, and Clinton itself is rich in American history as well as natu-

ral beauty. The interior color palette—strong blues, reds, and yellows—reflects the boldness of Colonial décor. Proprietor Glenn Coutu and the inn's manager, Helen Hoke, have drawn an international clientele with their luxe hospitality; setting out spring water, cookies, tea and cordials, along with homemade appetizers in the late afternoon. In the morning, Helen and Glenn set out their signature breakfasts at the communal kitchen table: egg, cheese, and tomato pie and a candied-walnut bundt cake.

While here: Head over to Indian River Marina (860-664-3704; indrivmar.com) where you can rent kayaks by the hour (\$12) or day (\$50) to explore the local rivers, wetlands, and shore, and get as close as possible to the abundant wildlife, then join the cue at Lobster Landing (152 Commerce St, 860-669-2005), for the best lobster roll this side of Maine. No time to visit France? Try the next best thing at Chamard Vineyards (115 Cow Hill Rd, 860-664-0299), and walk away with bottles of award-winning Chardonnay.

Ask for: Any of the four Laura Ashley-like rooms.

Just the Facts: Room rate (\$120-\$200) includes gourmet just-baked afternoon appetizers, cordials, and a three-course breakfast for two.

[for culture vultures;
shopping on the side]

Art Attack

Lancaster Arts Hotel

Lancaster, PA
 (866) 720-2787; lancasterartshotel.com

Three and a half hours from White Plains

“We’re here?” We had driven more than three hours for this? The City of Lancaster looked somewhat run-down. But we learned: don’t be fooled by first impressions. This Pennsylvania Dutch city, the nation’s oldest inland city, may not be overflowing with designer boutiques and overpriced gourmet restaurants, but it’s got plenty to offer the sophisticated traveler: inimitable antiques shops; fantastic art galleries; and, perhaps best of all, the Lancaster Arts Hotel, a boutique-y inn that is super-sleek, ultra-modern, and filled with great art and good taste. Born to house tobacco originally, today the exposed-brick building is home to 63 guest-rooms, an art gallery, and the John J. Jeffries restaurant—where the cooking and drinking water is “filtered through an in-house carbon and reverse osmosis

system.” Yes, it’s all PC (the house-filtered water that isn’t drunk is used to water the plants), organic, and local (“Farmer Tom” supplies the heirloom tomatoes)—and delish. That goes for dinner and breakfast. Between those two meals, go out and explore. You’ll be pleasantly surprised. We were.

While Here: Visit the more than 60 art galleries, museums, and art venues.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$169-\$349) include Egyptian sheets, wireless access, and Turkish robes and towels.

[we dare you]

Death Be Not Proud

Lizzie Borden B&B

Fall River, MA
 (508) 675-7333; lizzie-borden.com

Three hours from White Plains

Some Lizzie Borden B&B guests hope to summon the spirit of bludgeoned Andrew Borden and some don’t. We were firmly installed on the “don’t” side, so we opted to stay in Lizzie’s childhood room rather than the more popular guest-room where her stepmother’s body was discovered (and which gets close to \$1,000 on eBay for a stay on the anniversary night of the murders). Though you might have a preconceived idea of what the site of a double murder (albeit, 116 years old) looks like, visitors to this intriguingly spooky place are generally surprised by the bright, comfy, Victorian-decorated rooms. Enterprising owner Lee Ann Wilbert drives a BMW with plates that read, “FRTYWX” (proving that she is not above humorous promotion) and will gladly inform you that, by the way, “forty whacks” came from a children’s jump-rope trope during the trial. The actual number of ax blows to the heads? Ten for Dad, 19 for Stepmom.

While Here: Visit the world’s largest collection of in-water World War II naval ships Battleship Cove (508-678-1100; battleshipcove.org). Dine at the Abby Grill (508-679-9108; iicaculinary.com)—the International Institute of Culinary Arts training restaurant set within a magnificent cathedraled space where Lizzie Borden used to worship.

Ask for: It’s your funeral. Just kidding. Lizzie’s room is \$225 per night.

Just the Facts: Room rates (\$150-\$250) include an informative and entertaining time-line tour of the murders (regularly \$12.50 for those who don’t stay), and a hot breakfast that replicates the Borden’s last: Johnnycakes, bananas, sugar cookies, as well as bacon and eggs.

W